

Seats open as deadline draws near

There is less than a week left to file for several positions open in city and school boards in the county.

In the last week, four people have filed for the upcoming election by paying the \$5 fee: Kurt Vollertsen for District No. 1 on the Oberlin School District, Eric Green for Jennings City Council, Aden Schilling for Jennings School Board and Sara Carter for both the Jennings City Council and Jennings School Board.

The week before, Jeannie Martin filed for the at large position and Dan Wasson for District No. 2 on the Oberlin School Board. That leaves one spot on the board, now held by Barb Olson, with no candidate.

Candidates have until noon on Tuesday to file, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who is also the county election officer. Monday is a holiday, she said. The courthouse isn't closed, but people can't file on that day.

Positions which have not been filed for in the upcoming election:

- Mayor Gary Walter and Councilmen Jerry Fidele and Ray Ward

in Oberlin. Each is for a four year term. The mayor and Mr. Fidele are finishing full terms, while Mr. Ward was appointed to a vacancy last year.

Mayor Walter said he has decided not to run again. Mr. Fidele and Mr. Ward both said they were undecided as of Monday.

- Mrs. Olson for the District No. 3 position on the Oberlin School Board. It is a four-year term. Mrs. Olson said she is still undecided.

- Board Members Sarah Coiner, Sheila Rhodes, Lawrence Carter and Sara Carter for at-large seats on the Jennings School Board. One of the positions will be for a two-year term; so far there are two candidates for the four seats.

- City Council Member Martin LaRue in Jennings. The council also has one open position to fill.

- Mayor Russell Rhodes and Council members Ron Jacobs and Jeannie Spesser in Dresden. Each is a four-year term.

- City Council Members Rodney Leichter and Mike Helm in Norcatur. There is also a vacant position. All three are four-year spots.

Blowing up a storm for the team



PLAYING IN THE PEP BAND, Destry Jackson blew on her horn during an intermission at an Oberlin wrestling meet. For another picture of the pep band, see Page 5A

—Photos by Cynthia Haynes

SCHOOLS AT THE CROSSROADS

Herndon will choose

Oberlin board slow to promise anything

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Oberlin board members told the Herndon School Board at a joint meeting last Monday night that they are willing to help the small neighboring district, but they didn't make any promises.

The meeting at the Herndon School gym attracted 12 people from both communities. The school board there has been talking with three adjacent districts — Oberlin, Atwood and Golden Plains — about a possible merger. Herndon Board Member Tom Kogl started the session, referring to a list of 12 questions the Herndon board has sent to all its potential merger partners. He said the most important question was the first one, whether they would be able to keep the Herndon school open for two or three years.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt said Oberlin has a lot to offer Herndon students. In all of this, he said, the most important thing is to do what is best for all of the kids involved. Hopefully, before making any decision, the Herndon stu-

dent council, parents, board, community and students will come to Oberlin for a tour of the schools.

Mr. Glodt said the Herndon School has great tradition just like Oberlin. It seems that at every scholar bowl competition, it is always Herndon and Oberlin in the end.

Enrollment isn't going up in Oberlin, he said, but that's true in most area districts.

Mr. Kogl asked if it would be possible to keep the school in Herndon open for two to three years after a merger. Mr. Glodt said financially speaking, the school would be able to continue to do things as they are doing now for that time. Any school district Herndon talks to right now will be willing to help educate the kids, said Mr. Glodt. It is when the tougher times come that the tough decisions will have to be made.

Can Oberlin operate financially on what the district gets for the next four years? asked Mr. Kogl. Mr. Glodt, who started this fall, said he (See OBERLIN on Page 5A)

Merger review

The Herndon School Board is seeking a merger partner as the district's enrollment approaches the point of no return.

- Superintendent Kim Juenemann said the district has about 85 students this year, but she expects that to shrink to 65. Story on Page 5A.

- The Herndon board may have found the best fit, philosophically at least, when it met with the Golden

Plains board on Wednesday. Story to right.

- Oberlin School Board members warmed up to the idea of a "true consolidation" with Herndon, where students of a combined high school eventually would choose new colors and a new mascot. Story below.

- Oberlin board members, at a joint meeting last week, didn't promise anything about keeping Herndon schools open. Story at left.

Students would decide on mascot and colors

At its first meeting about consolidation with the Herndon School District, the Oberlin School Board met question No. 6 about changing the mascot and colors with silence.

By Monday night, though, the board was ready to look at the option.

Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann said that as long as the schools remained separate and in the same district, there wouldn't be any changes except the district

name. If the two schools combine, she said, then it would be best to let the kids decide what they want to do.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt said he agreed with letting the kids decide. He said he didn't know if people in Oberlin would have any problem with changing the mascot from the Red Devils or the colors from red, gray and white.

For this reason, he said, he didn't (See MASCOT on Page 2A)

Herndon, Rexford separated by gravel

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

The Herndon and Golden Plains School boards agreed last Wednesday that one of the biggest problems with their two districts is the 35 miles between them, most of it a gravel road.

The two boards met last Wednesday night in the gym at Selden to discuss the possibility of consolidation. It was the last of three meetings for the Herndon board, which had already met with the boards from Oberlin and Atwood.

Golden Plains Superintendent Roger Baskerville opened the meeting by asking the Herndon board how they got to the meeting. Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann said they drove on the highway through Oberlin.

Mr. Baskerville said there isn't a hard-surface road between the two high schools, and it is a 35-mile drive. Mrs. Juenemann said Oberlin and Atwood are only 20 miles away from the Herndon school. She said there is some concern about the distance.

The two boards jumped into the

12 questions the other boards had worked through. The first was on keeping the Herndon school open. Mr. Baskerville said that would be something he and Mrs. Juenemann would have to sit down and really look at and do some cost analysis on.

The most important thing, he said, is to do what is best for the kids.

The combined budget would be around \$2.4 million, he said, but there would be some transportation costs.

Unlike other districts, all of which have lost students in recent years, Golden Plains has actually gained 12 students since count day and expects to hold steady. The reason is a dairy which opened a couple of years ago near Bretton, west of Rexford. The district now has about 195 students.

Mrs. Juenemann said the districts now have two high schools and two grade schools.

The Golden Plains group asked, out of the 86 students now attending Herndon, how many would (See REXFORD on Page 5A)

Woman, 100, found walking the best way

By **MARY LOU OLSON**

Catharine Munson, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday on Jan. 26, said she walked everywhere when she was a child and never learned to drive a car until she was out of high school.

Mrs. Munson said she was born on Jan. 26, 1903, at Globe, in Douglas County, and her parents, P.W. and Charlotte Layport, never had a car when she was growing up. She said that the first car she ever drove was a Model T.

"Everyone walked in those days," she said, "Among my fondest memories is walking to school with neighborhood kids. We walked four blocks to school in the morning, came home for lunch, then made the same trek after school, so we had our exercise daily without even thinking

about it."

She remembers well the years during and after World War I.

"The boys in our class thought sure they would be going to war, but since the Armistice was signed before we graduated in 1921, they didn't have to" she said, "and though it was termed the 'war to end all wars,' unfortunately we have seen many wars since then."

Mrs. Munson had two brothers and two sisters. The family later moved to Cottonwood Falls, where she graduated from Chase County High School. While attending Emporia State Teachers College, she met her future husband, M.D. Munson, a veteran of World War I, in the college library.

"Our dating was pretty casual," (See MRS. on Page 9A)



Mrs. Munson



CHECKING OUT THE EQUIPMENT, Jake Robinson (front) and Jess Randel were working to get everything ready to webcast the Oberlin Invitational. —Herald staff photo

Students to webcast wrestling tourney

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

It's just about time for "lights, camera, action!" for 20 students in the television, communications and computer technology classes at Decatur Community High.

Saturday, the webcast project they have been working on all year will be seen by viewers for the first time this year as they put the Oberlin Invitational Wrestling Tournament out on the Internet.

This is the second year for the program, said senior Jake Robinson. The students broadcast both the invitational and regional wrestling tournaments last year. The web events attracted 3,000 viewers last year and the students hope to get just as many this time. The webcast is "just about live," Mr. Robinson said, though there may be a delay on the Internet.

Mr. Robinson said the website at <http://www.usd294.org> will not only have video coverage of the tournament, but brackets to show who is in the lead and pictures that will be updated frequently. The students have permission from KFNF Radio to use their commentary with the video online.

For the first time, the students have been selling ads. They would like to show the state tournament over the Internet and have filed for approval. The money raised through the ads would help pay for that venture.

Mr. Robinson, who is the lead for the program, said he has been working on it since the beginning of the school year, although the crunch has come in the last month. (See WEBCAST on Page 9A)

With 86 students and no prospects, district on block

The Herndon and Oberlin school boards met last Monday night in Herndon, but Oberlin is just one of the three districts the smaller district may choose for consolidation.

Herndon's first meeting was with the Atwood School District. Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann said Atwood board members promised to keep the school in Herndon open for a year.

The second meeting was with Oberlin, where the board didn't make any promises, but simply discussed the possibilities. The last meeting was last Wednesday night in Selden with the Golden Plains board. Board members agreed the two districts had the same philosophies but their schools are 35 miles away from each other on a gravel road.

On Monday night, Mrs. Juenemann said the Herndon District has 86 students this year. She expects to lose five to 10 kids next year and they will then plummet to 65. That is one of the reasons the Herndon board has started to look at merger options.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt projects the school will lose between 12 to 15 next year, taking enrollment down to between 461 and 464.

At the beginning of the meeting last Monday, Mrs. Juenemann reeled off a few of the basics she has found out about consolidation. One of the biggest is when two districts consolidate, the new district gets to

keep their combined budget for four years. It will be frozen and combined by the state, but won't be reduced. The only way the budget will change is if the district gains students. At that time the board can take the higher budget.

The board of a combined district, she said, would comprise seven members chosen from the two boards and serve for a year as an interim board. Then the new district will elect a board to serve until the end of their terms.

Part of the interim board's duties would be to determine new districts and the election process.

They will also have to align the staff from the old districts. There will be a time during the process, said Mrs. Juenemann, that none of the staff will have contracts until the board decides who will teach what.

The consolidation would have to be approved by the state Department of Education, she said.

After a decision on whether the Herndon School District wants to consolidate and which district they want to go with, the merger would have to be voted on by both districts. Mrs. Juenemann said both the voters in the Herndon District and those in the district they are consolidating will vote on whether they will allow consolidation.

She said the plan is for that to happen in the April election. At 7 p.m. next Wednesday, the board has set a town hall meeting in Herndon to discuss the options with voters

Blowing for a fall



KEEPING AN EYE on his music, Adam Spanier played with the pep band during a lull in the action at an Oberlin wrestling match earlier this month.

* Rexford, Herndon divided by gravel

(Continued from Page 1A) come to Rexford or Selden for school. Mrs. Juenemann said there was no way of knowing.

She said she has met with the students in Herndon, and they asked intelligent questions about their choices. Mrs. Juenemann said she hasn't asked them what direction they would want to go in.

Mr. Baskerville said they all know what the people in Herndon are going through. The schools went through a consolidation years ago, adopting the name Golden Plains. The high school is in Rexford and the grade school in Selden.

One of the biggest concerns, said Golden Plains Board President Paul Bruggeman, is the financial burden. Mrs. Juenemann said the budget of the combined district would be frozen for four years.

With transportation, she said, the majority of the Herndon students are from the north. There are four bus routes, none longer than 30 minutes.

Golden Plains Board Member Mark Miller asked if they did consolidate and keep the school open in Herndon, would there be any changes in how it is run. Mrs. Juenemann said that would be up to the interim board, which would be made up from the two boards and run the district for a year.

The two schools could share staff and possibly offer more classes.

Cindi Grafel from Herndon asked if the board would think about leaving the doors open as long as it was financially feasible and doing so wouldn't hurt any of the schools. Mr. Baskerville said he would have to look at the situation.

Mrs. Juenemann said although she expects Herndon enrollment to plummet to 65 in the next few years, people still want to maintain a school presence in the community.

Mr. Bruggeman asked if the high schools would want to play sports together. Mrs. Juenemann said they are interested for the girls teams but want to give the boys an opportunity to play in Herndon next year.

Mrs. Juenemann said that if the community and board decide to go with Golden Plains, they would have to vote in the April election for consolidation. With Golden Plains having a bond to pay off for some improvements, she said, it would be in the resolution who is responsible to continue paying on it.

Mr. Baskerville joked that he had taken the colors of the Golden Plains team and the Herndon team and mixed them together and came up with pink as the district color. He said when it came closer to consolidation time, it would be up to the students to pick a new mascot and the colors for the school.

The Herndon board asked about districts and how the Golden Plains board was elected. Mr. Bruggeman said they have two members from Menlo, two from Selden and two from Rexford and then one at large member.

The two boards briefly talked about salaries and insurance, and found that the Herndon district paid more for insurance.

Mrs. Juenemann said this could be an opportunity to better align the staff so that teachers could be teaching in their certified areas.

Mr. Miller said he is trying to put himself in the Herndon board's shoes. The miles mean a lot, especially for younger kids having to be on buses.

"We probably believe in your philosophy more (than the larger districts)," said Mrs. Juenemann, "but geography has a lot to do with it."

The two boards talked briefly about block classes and having teachers drive back and forth. That would allow each of the schools to have art, music and other classes they may not have now and share the teacher. It would mean the student would only have some classes every other day.

The biggest problems voiced were the distance and not knowing how many Herndon kids would go to Golden Plains even if the two did consolidate.

Kyle Grafel, from Herndon, said he has kids in school and the decision as to where they will go is something his family will consider for a long time. No one knows where they will be a year from now, especially with the economy.

If all of the students decided to go to school at Golden Plains, said Mr. Miller, they would need an addition.

The Golden Plains board said they have a good school and that everyone would benefit from a merger, but they didn't know what to do about the distance or gravel road.

If only the two districts were 15 miles closer, said Mr. Baskerville.

* Oberlin board 'wants to help kids'

(Continued from Page 1A) thought that they could. He said he has been impressed with the board and the budget. Oberlin hasn't had to cut anything even though they are losing kids.

He said he could see leaving the grade school, through sixth grade, open as a more viable option. The elementary school would be able to stay open as long as it was financially possible, he said.

Mr. Kogl moved on to question No. 2 about aligning and sharing staff. Mr. Glodt said they have no plan at this time. It would be something the interim board of a joint district would have to determine.

He said the Oberlin district could probably absorb all of the students without adding any teachers, but that is because it has lost so many.

If consolidation happens, said Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann, the new board will decide who works where and does what. There may be some reduction in force.

Both of the districts offer extra-curricular activities, from academics to sports. Mr. Kogl said the board is asking for ideas to combine the activities. He asked if the two districts will be able to cooperate on sports and activities before a merger. That seems to be the way most districts start to consolidate, said Mr. Glodt. It would be a good logical first step.

The initial concern, Mr. Kogl said, is girls sports. The boys teams haven't had any problem getting the numbers. There are only 13 girls in high school and there isn't enough interest to field a basketball team, although there are some girls who want to play.

Oberlin Board Member Dewayne Jackson said if the two high schools remained independent facilities, they would play in the leagues they are in now. Mrs. Juenemann agreed they could stay as two high schools in the same district and play separately.

Oberlin Teacher Rhonda Barth said to keep in mind that Oberlin players don't start until after sixth grade while in Herndon their sixth graders are allowed to play sports with the junior high kids. In Oberlin they don't start playing until seventh grade.

Mr. Jackson asked about music

and programs that take place during the school day. Mrs. Juenemann said as long as two high schools remain open, the programs would remain separate. There may be some savings in sharing teachers.

Mr. Glodt said transportation issues depend on whether the building in Herndon stays open. Mr. Kogl said he thought some of the bus drivers would be interested in continuing to drive.

Oberlin Board Member Dan Wasson asked how far the farthest student is from the school. Mr. Kogl said they go into Nebraska to get some students. The longest bus route is 15 miles.

Both districts do door to door pick up now. Mr. Kogl said he would like to continue that as long as possible. Mr. Glodt said he is a firm believer that is the best way to pick up kids.

Mr. Kogl said they keep the buses current. The oldest in Herndon is a 1992 or 1994 backup bus. The activity bus was purchased three years ago refurbished.

Mr. Glodt told the board for question No. 7, that the Oberlin District has a full time technology coordinator.

Mrs. Juenemann said the Herndon students take foreign language and upper level math via Internet.

The two boards use e-rate which is a discount from the government on communication. The amount the district gets depends on how many free and reduced lunches in the district. Mrs. Juenemann said she thought theirs was a little higher than Oberlin's but wasn't sure. Oberlin has an e-rate of 65 percent off the normal price.

The boards in the two school systems have similar district representation. In Oberlin, there are six districts with one board member from each and then one at-large member. In Herndon, there are three districts with two members from each.

The Herndon board asked about salary, insurance and other monetary issues for their staff. Mr. Glodt said all of that would be taken care of in negotiations.

The Oberlin District pays for a single employee insurance plan for every full-time employee. Mr. Wasson said the Oberlin Schools have a lot of single people and the board didn't think it was fair to offer family coverage.

Mrs. Juenemann said the Herndon board allows up to \$7,000 to go towards their staff insurance.

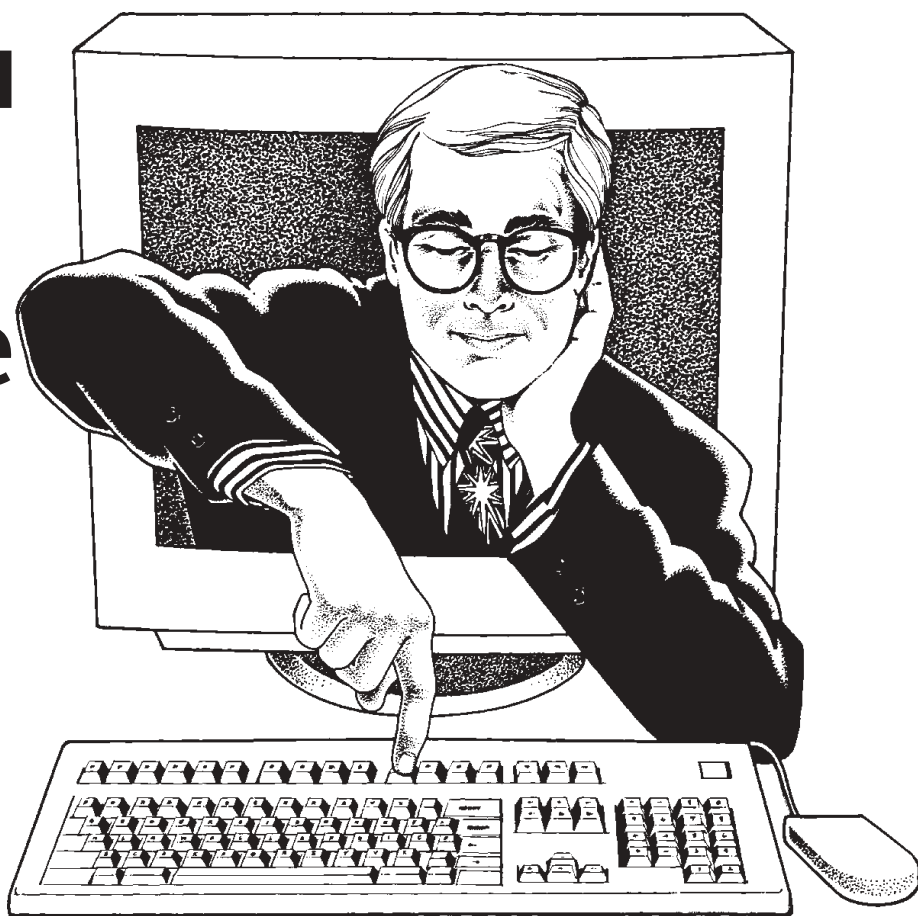
Before ending the meeting, the two boards answered a few questions from the audience. One of the dads in the audience asked what Oberlin has to offer his kids in terms of education. Mr. Glodt said the programs in Oberlin are impressive. He pointed out the music program. Mrs. Olson said people from Herndon should come to Oberlin and see for themselves what the district has to offer.

Bring or send the students who may attend here, she said. Let them eat lunch with the kids in Oberlin, come to the classes. It is a tough decision to make, she said, so come look first.

Mr. Glodt said that Oberlin has a lot of scholarships to offer graduates. He said he has only been here since the beginning of the school year, and he was impressed with the scholarships and how early the students start to work for them.


Mr. Glodt said he thinks each parent should be looking at every district the Herndon board is looking at and going to visit the schools.

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Board wants to go out to polish its summary

The Golden Plains Board discussed calling a closed session during their joint meeting with the Herndon School Board last Wednesday night until they found out it wasn't allowed under the state Open Meetings Law.

Although there are several reasons boards can call closed session, consolidation is not one of them. Oberlin Herald Reporter Kimberly

Brandt pointed out to the board that it didn't fall into one of the list of reasons to close the doors.

The Golden Plains board wanted to move to the library before wrapping up to make sure none of the board members had left out anything they wanted to say.

Ms. Brandt pointed out that anyone could join the board in the library.